(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the news-item captioned IGNOU Pariksha Kendra Per Khuleaam Nakal as appeared in the media recently;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether Government are aware of the fact that students were disqualified in the examination for non-functioning of computers due to failure of electricity in various centres allotted for conducting practical examination of MCA third years;

(d) whether it is also a fact that no action has been taken by IGNOU against the concerned centres; and

(e) if so, concrete steps taken by Government to rectify such situation and to save the future of students?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. VALLABHBHAI RAMJIBHAI KATHIRIA): (a) and (b) According to the information furnished by Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), the investigations carried out by the University have revealed that the news item appearing in Dainik Jagaran dated 12th June 2003 was baseless and fabricated.

(c) to (e) The University has informed that no such incident has come to their notice.

Spreading of mass literacy and education

614. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any new steps for spreading mass literacy and education to every nook and corner of the country;

(b) if so, whether this will help to ensure that learning becomes a continuous and life long process;

(c) whether Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has drawn any plan to launch a dedicated satellite for spreading knowledge in the country; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) and (b) The initiatives of the government to spread literacy and education in the country include:

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan with the following objectives:

— All children in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate School,'Back to School' camp by 2003.

— All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007.

— All children complete eight years of elementary schooling by 2010.

— Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.

— Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.

— Universal retention by 2010.

The adult literacy schemes of the National Literacy Mission which provide functional literacy to non literates in the age group of 15-35 years. While basic literacy is imparted under Total Literacy Campaigns and Post Literacy Programmes, life long learning opportunities are provided under the Continuing Education Programme.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Central School at Madural

615. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any demand has been raised to open another Central School at Madurai; and